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SUBJECT: REPLY TO BIOTECH VOTES DEMARCHE: OCTOBER 19
MEETINGS EU AGRICULTURE COUNCIL AND SCOFCAH

REF: STATE 106819

¶1. (U) Post delivered Reftel talking points to relevant UK officials, including the Head of Novel Foods and Processes, Food Standards Agency (FSA).

¶2. (U) We received a swift and unequivocal written response: "The UK retains a science-based policy for biotech authorizations and we have not identified any problems with these maize varieties. We continue to press the Commission to present its proposal for low level presence."

¶3. (U) Further clarification from the FSA was obtained verbally. On the issue of zero tolerance, the FSA said: "We won't let it lie, but realistically we expect little to no action until the European Commissioners have started their new terms (of office)." The FSA revealed that they do not expect the zero tolerance issue to be raised in the EU Agriculture Council meeting as it is not on the agenda. However, they confirmed that their representative at the Standing Committee on Food Chain and Animal Health (SCOFCAH), Mr. Keith Millar, Head of Animal Feed, will be raising zero tolerance/low level presence as an issue, and pointing out the long delay by the Commission in reaching a technical solution at the start of this meeting.

¶4. (U) The FSA also clarified the nature of the SCOFCAH agenda item in connection with Syngenta's Bt11. The European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) will present its latest opinion on the renewal of Bt11 authorization for discussion, not/not for a vote.

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